

## EDITORIAL

Dear Quaternarists,

Politics is big news at the moment.

The resignation of the recent British Prime Minister over Brexit; the US President steam-rolling all-comers on whatever doesn't suit his agenda; Australians still scratching their heads over the recent land slide victory of the Liberal party (in what was touted as the 'Climate Election' and a shoo-in for Labour); and an unprecedentedly large number of Google searches by Australians ...'relocating to New Zealand'.

(Interestingly a news poll prior to the recent Australian Federal election noted that if the current New Zealand Prime Minister was running for office in Australia, she would have won!).

All this 'news' distracts from the biggest issue the world is currently experiencing – that of climate change. The more extreme or unusual weather events become, the more species that disappear, ice sheets that disintegrate and islands that submerge, the greater the distraction away from the issue. But, the effects of climate change are making small inroads into mainstream media. Recently, several New Zealand cities (Christchurch, Nelson, Auckland, Hawkes Bay) declared "climate emergencies", following the same declaration in the UK.

In New Zealand, the Iwi Chairs Forum climate change spokesman Mike Smith said climate change was the biggest issue facing humanity and needed to be treated seriously, noting that climate change is "probably the biggest issue that humanity has ever faced... "a slowly evolving issue that is rapidly increasing in speed.... And "we have to react with speed and scale."

While declaring a climate emergency does not compel a local or regional government to act, it does highlight the scale and severity of the problem, and certainly signals the urgency required to address it. "It is easy to be complacent when you hear the word climate change all the time – we need to step up the way we are messaging the climate crisis with language that reflects how serious it is." (McLachlan, 2019)

With INQUA just around the corner we anticipate that this will be a much-discussed topic.

In this issue of Quaternary Australasia Leoni Peti reflects on the December 2018 AQUA conference keynote speakers, with an analysis of the gender break down of attendees, based on information from Tim Barrows and Jessica Reeves. There are Field Reports from Heather Haines (an AQUA travel grant recipients and this issue's 'Meet a Member') and Mariani Connor and an update on the Anthropocene global markers from Larissa Schneider and Simon Haberle. We also reflect on tributes to Bob Galloway and Tony Martin; both who passed away earlier this year.

We look forward to seeing AQUA members in Dublin at the XX INQUA Congress. To be sure!

Yours Quaternarily,

**Sanja van Huet and Carol Smith**

*Co Editors*

## REFERENCE

McLaughlan (2019). 'We have to react with speed' – Iwi leaders on climate change. 7:02 pm on 7 May 2019. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/388691/we-have-to-react-with-speed-iwi-leaders-on-climate-change> accessed 15 June, 2019.

